



claire tabouret

los angeles

Claire Tabouret is a French-born painter who came to Los Angeles a few years ago. She works often with large-scale canvases that feature large swaths of a single shade that can seem fractured between lines. Originally she painted mostly landscapes, but recently brought human figures into her works. Tabouret's figures mutate between works; sometimes they don a mask or turn their backs to the viewer, other times her paintings feature younger women with smeared and smudged makeup and stare stone-faced back at the viewer. The starkness of Tabouret's work is only matched by its colorful allure.

MM Are your works inspired by your immediate environment?

CT Yes. How I feel, where I am, the people in my life, but also the bigger picture of what's happening in the world, all of this inspires me. I am constantly absorbing information, feeling things, observing the world around me, and I need to do something to process it all. That's why I paint.

MM Many of your works are imposing, large-scale pieces. Do you prefer to work with larger canvases?

CT I am very attracted by large scale artworks. As a painter, but also as a viewer, your body is surrounded by the painting, it's an immersive experience. Also I have a lot of energy, I am a fighter. These big scales are very exciting to me.

MM There are also pieces where the figure is turned, facing away from the viewer, or their face is obscured with a mask. Conversely, the pieces with faces included, the fact seems incredibly important. What significance does the face have in your work?

CT At first I was painting mainly landscapes. Landscape at night. When I introduced the human figure, in 2011, I was surprised of how much I felt that the painting was looking at me as much as me looking at it. I was obsessed by this confrontation.

That's when I started to paint these big group of kids all staring at the viewer. These are the first works that gained recognition and brought attention to my practice. They have something quite hypnotizing.

A few years later when I decided to move from Paris to Los Angeles, I painted big paintings of Amazons on their horses. They are turning their back to the public, looking towards a new territory. At that time, I was making a shift and I was turning my back to my previous life.

MM Do you think your work is received differently when exhibited in different countries?

CT My work is about destiny, why are we capable of making certain choices, where do determination and strength comes from, how can we escape definitions, and embrace ambiguities. I think painting allows me to approach these subject in a universal way. I received intense and moving reactions to my shows in Asia, Europe, and America.

MM What prompts the use of certain colors in your art?

CT I start every painting with a bright layer of neon colors. I like using neon colors, they are not colors you would find in a natural landscape—therefore they evoke, for me, a mental light, a mental world. Then I paint with thin layers of acrylics diluted in water, most of the time we can barely distinguish this first bright neon color, but you can feel that the light is coming from underneath, from behind.

OPPOSITE "Les Débutantes (Dark blue)," (2015). Acrylic and textiles on canvas. 330 x 230 centimeters. Courtesy the artist. Photo: bluntbangs.biz

BELOW "Makeup (red-haired)," (2016). Acrylic on wood. 24 x 16 1/4 inches. Courtesy the artist. Photo: bluntbangs.biz

